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the family in Siam, his wife (acting head of the family) in the village in China, and most of the children of the marriage in China.

Such arrangements obviously call for careful financing. The emigrant abroad, after deducting what he needs to meet his expenses, usually remits his savings periodically to his home in China for the support of the family there and to meet extraordinary expenses, such as of a marriage in the family. At the same time the family home in China is a kind of insurance for the emigrant, for he can always return there if he is unemployed.

The influence of the emigrant on the age-old ideas and customs of his home village has been great. If he has had much foreign experience he almost invariably condemns the traditional family arrangement. In the words of a returned tin-miner from Malaya:[1]

> The joint family is an obnoxious social institution. When a member of such a family earns money he is obliged to support all the rest of it and to carry a heavy economic burden. I have had a very bitter experience and always felt that I am virtually the slave of my family. They are of no help to me at all.

A critical attitude towards the family and marriage systems is very general among returned emigrants. They remark that living in the modern world is a complicated affair, and that the joint family is no longer practicable. Many of them felt (in 1935) that an early disintegration of the family in south China was inevitable. Moreover, many of the emigrants have seen what marriage may mean in modern Western life when love and courtship enter into the marriage preliminaries and the union is (or should be) based on affection. An emigrant inevitably contrasts this with the Chinese system wherein the husband and wife are often unknown to one another before marriage. Stubborn and resistant as the traditional family system is, there is evidence from all over the Nanyang that as regards marriage the traditional procedure is in retreat before the modern marriage, and that the joint family system is being strained in some cases almost to breaking-point. Again, in the Nanyang itself, the increased mobility of members of the family is a force threatening to loosen its bonds.

In spite of these tendencies, marriage custom among the Chinese in the Nanyang at the time of the outbreak of the war between Japan and the Allies in 1941 generally followed Chinese traditional

[1] Ta Chen, op. cit. p. 142.

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custom.[1] All this ceremonial was very expensive and involved the family in a burden of debt.

One result of the Revolution in China was to initiate a changing attitude towards family institutions. Books IV and V of the Civil Code of the Republic of China deal with the family and succession. The law was promulgated on 26 December 1930 and came into force on 5 May 1931. Polygamy was abolished, and though concubinage in many cases continued, the concubine was now a mistress without legal rights.[2] According to the new law the parties to a marriage were empowered to make the marriage agreement of their own accord, the sole restrictions being that a man who had not completed his eighteenth year and a woman not yet sixteen must obtain the consent of their parents or guardian. No registration of marriage was provided for.

In the Straits Settlements a Chinese Marriage Committee, appointed in 1925 by the Government, recommended that there should be registration for both new- and old-style marriages.[3] The old-style marriage would be valid if the marriage ceremony was carried out with all the essentials required by custom in the district of China from which the bridegroom and bride or their ancestors came, or by such modified custom as was observed by the Chinese residents of the Colony for that district. The committee found it impossible to submit proposals for legislation as to what forms or ceremonies should constitute marriage, because the evidence disclosed the fact that there were no essentials for Chinese marriages in the old style common to all the districts of south China or to the locally born descendants of emigrants from these districts, while the new style of marriage did not require any particular form.

The evidence taken by the committee revealed a practically unanimous opposition among Chinese residents in the Straits Settlements to any divorce legislation.[4]

[1] For a description of these customs see G.B., Colonial Office, *Report of the Commission on Mui Tsai in Hong Kong and Malaya*, Colonial no. 125 (1937), and Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, pp. 148–50.

[2] cf. M. H. van der Valk, 'The New Chinese Criminal Code', *Pacific Affairs* (1936) pp. 76, 77. Under the new Chinese Criminal Code which became operative in July 1935 husband and wife are equally liable to a year's imprisonment for committing adultery, and moreover the person with whom the adultery is committed incurs the same punishment. Complaint can be laid only by the injured spouse.

[3] *Chinese Marriage Committee*, Singapore 1926.

[4] The position in the Federated Malay States, however, was temporarily revolutionized by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs Enactment which was passed

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The new-style marriage, based on the consent of the parties, and often arranged by themselves, has gradually been spreading in popularity among the better educated. The cost of the wedding and its preliminaries has also been much reduced. This is a consequence, too, of the growing equality between the sexes.

Education. It was only by dint of continual defeat at the hands of foreign Powers that China realized that her traditional literary system of education, which had endured for over a thousand years, did not fit her to withstand the assaults of her enemies. At long last she decided to adopt an educational system on modern lines. The greatest obstacle in doing this was the classical language. The literary language in which all education was conducted had become completely divorced from the spoken language, and it needed many years of study before a student could obtain anything like command of it. Whilst it remained, a democratic system of education was out of the question.[1] So it was that in 1917 there occurred the most revolutionary happening in the history of Chinese education, the initiation of the *pai hua* movement.[2]

Pai hua, or written vernacular, had existed in China for centuries. Most popular novels were written in it, but it had never obtained the recognition of the literati. Corresponding, as it did, to the spoken language, it was much more easily learnt than *wen li*, the Chinese literary language, though it was clumsier and more discursive. So when Dr Hu Shih maintained that the literary language should be abolished in schools and that *pai hua* should be elevated to the rank of a literary medium, the proposal was considered as threatening the very foundations of Chinese culture. But the movement obtained powerful political support and in January 1920, the Minister of Education ordered that the spoken language should be used in the teaching of Chinese in primary schools. The form of *pai hua* approved for this purpose became known as *Kuo Yü*, or the National Language.[3]

in 1899 and repealed in 1932. By this enactment the Secretary for Chinese Affairs had powers to decide the custody and guardianship of women and children, and to order divorce, separation, adoption, and betrothal.

[1] Dr W. A. P. Martin estimated about 1880 that the proportion of Chinese who could read and understand what they read was about one in twenty.

[2] For a full exposition of the subject see Victor Purcell, *Problems of Chinese Education* (London, Kegan Paul, 1936).

[3] See Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance*. The Haskell Lectures, 1933 (University of Chicago Press, 1934).